

**Town of Hamilton  
Community Preservation Committee  
January 12, 2012 Minutes**

**Attendees**

The meeting was held in the Memorial Room of Town Hall with the following Committee members in attendance: Tom Catalano, Ed Howard, Jeff Hubbard, Jay Butler, Ray Whipple, Keith Glidden, Nepo Trapanier, and Peter Britton. Christine Berry as CPC Coordinator was also present. With a quorum of CPC members present the meeting was called to order at 7:35pm

**Welcome and Introduction to New CPC Member – Clarence Trapanier**

Clarence (Nepo) Trapanier was introduced to the CPC. Nepo is replacing Leigh Keyser as the CPC's representative from the Hamilton Housing Authority.

**Acceptance of Meeting Minutes from December 8<sup>th</sup> CPC Meeting**

The minutes from the December 8<sup>th</sup> meeting were accepted by the CPC

**Discussion of Essex Street/Sidewalk Trail Proposal – Rudi Pizzano**

Rudi Pizzano reported that he has pulled together a committee of residents, primarily the from Essex Street area to assist with this proposal. Steve Clark explained the dangerous conditions found on Essex Street. He cited a study completed by MassDOT that indicates how highly the road is traveled. Police data indicates that Essex Street is one of the most dangerous roads in Hamilton. He noted that 100 years ago there were six different ways to get from downtown to the Junction; and that today there is only one way – by car. Steve said that the 1965 and 2004 Master Plans note the importance of expanding the sidewalks wherever possible to accommodate walkers and bikers. This project is consistent with those goals. Steve noted that Asbury Street and Bay Road all have sidewalks. He acknowledged that people are initially wary of sidewalks being installed but usually come to enjoy them once they are constructed. He noted that many of the comments in the petition cited safety as a concern. Steve said that this project is about improving safety. He noted that people would use Essex Street more if there were a sidewalk. Steve believes a sidewalk can be placed in-between the road and the telephone poles with few exceptions.

Keith stated that he was an avid cyclist. He rode his bicycle on Essex Street and didn't feel that the sidewalk could be constructed on one side of the road only. He felt there would have to be crosswalks, which could increase the danger. Steve acknowledged that the telephone lines do cross the street, but thought that a sidewalk could be put in safely. Rudi said there were logical points where crosswalks could go. He said that we would work with a designer or engineer to determine that. Keith asked if the goal was to accommodate bikers; because he noted that cyclists stay on the road so they would not benefit from the sidewalk. Rudi said that this project is geared more for children and seniors.

Tom Catalano commended the applicants for their very thorough and well-conceived application. Tom questioned the cost analysis based on some recent similar projects in Hamilton. He also questioned whether people would have signed the petition if they knew how much it would cost and that it would use up most of the Town's CPA funds.

Rudi stated the Woodbury Street project was more complicated than Essex Street. He said there were more wetland issues, changes in elevation, and litigation. Rudi felt there is much more room on Essex Street. Granite curbing would only go where it was absolutely necessary. The remainder of the trail would be similar to that on Larch Row. Tom stated that granite is used as a safety feature.

Tom asked whether there were any MassDOT design standards that applied here. Rudi said that a 6-foot wide sidewalk would be needed to meet state standards.

Peter Britton noted that he has overseen miles of trails created using  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch pack material. He thought the State requirements may be too onerous for this Committee. Rudi thought the sidewalk may need to be asphalt on the state portion of the road. Peter asked whether it be defined as a trail or path. Peter said that speaking for the Affordable Housing Trust there is concern about taking almost all the CPA nest egg and using it for a sidewalk.

Steve noted that CPA funds could be used for engineering and planning. Wenham CPA funds were used for the Walnut Road trail. They took an incremental approach in funding over several years and also did private fundraising. Connor O'Holleran noted that he doesn't ride on Essex Street due to safety concerns.

Tom noted that the design would need to show the Right of Way and where the path would sited. Peter said an elevation profile would be important to show as well. Rudi has involved Peter Kane in doing that type of work. Jay inquired whether the applicant was asking for the full amount of the cost of the sidewalk. Rudi said yes. He said there may be other state grants available for this project. Tom suggested the applicant look to split the project into two phases – design and engineering first, then implementation. Rudi was hesitant to agree to that. Ray Whipple said that the Committee needs to be clear on who the applicant will be. This will need to be a DPW project to go through all of the appropriate procurement procedures. This project can only be undertaken under prevailing wage laws. Peter said the applicant needs to talk to the DPW.

Ed Howard noted that all the existing easements have all been sold off. Given his experience and in involvement in the Essex sidewalk construction recently he suggested the applicant divide the project into pieces – state and local owned and that it should be called a recreational path. Jeff Hubbard felt that from his perspective and knowing what is going on with the Town, that it will be difficult to get the community's appetite to deplete CPA funds for this project. Rudi said that the CPC just voted to put \$500,000 away because we didn't have any projects. Tom disagreed and explained that the funds were locked up to secure a better investment rate as we have other expensive projects that are coming down the pipeline, such

affordable housing projects and Town Hall renovations. Lori Pizzano said that she disagrees whole-heartedly this that is not a priority. She said that safety is critical and that this project could save someone's life. Rudi said the Committee should just bring it before Town Meeting, and let the voters decide. He said that if it doesn't pass, the article can be amended or we can bring it before Town Meeting again in the fall.

Peter noted there has been no previous design done with a firm plan in place. Peter suggested the applicant coordinate with Essex County Trails Association (ECTA). Tom asked if there are other landowners that would be affected, was it just the state and town –involved? He said that the prospect of spending this much of our CPA funds on this project does not sit well. The Municipal Affordable Housing Trust is also vying for these funds.

Christine noted that there is approximately \$1.34 million in the undedicated reserve, \$48,000 in the open space reserve, \$41,000 in the historic preservation reserves, and \$70,000 in the community housing reserves. Rudi suggested the CPC may want to bond this project since interest rates are so low. Lori believes this project will take too long to complete. She said this project is not going to raise anyone's taxes. Tom said that CPA does have an impact on taxes because whenever possible projects that would have had to be paid for by taxpayers are paid for with CPA funds. Peter noted the new steps and new paint at Town Hall. Steve said it would be regrettable to have nothing come out of this, whether it is entire project or just the engineering.

Peter said there might not be a willingness to get this completed. He said the CPC does not want to put something forward to Town Meeting without having fully explored a project. Rudi said they would go back and look at the project and see how they could reduce the amount of asphalt. Tom suggested they look for other funding such as transportation enhancements, and to look at the cost of different materials.

Steve wanted to make sure the CPC knew that this just wasn't just him and Rudi coming forward with this project; that there are many residents in the Essex Street area that are concerned about this.

It was noted that Verizon just completed a multi-million dollar project burying fiber optic cables only 18 inches under the ground.

### **Patton Estate Task Force**

The Board of Selectmen are setting up a nine-member task force to evaluate the next steps on moving forward on the planning for the future of the Patton Estate. They are looking for a member of the CPC to sit on this committee. Peter Britton volunteered for the role. Peter is familiar with the property and familiar with the restrictions that were set up. Tom noted that it will be important to evaluate the historic house on the property. Peter said it will be costly to set up athletic fields. Gordon College may be undertaking archiving for the house. Jeff is hoping this task force will look at the property as a clean slate. Ed said the property pays

roughly \$30,000 in taxes and \$100,000 in maintenance a year. Ed expressed interest in sitting on the task force as an at-large member. Jay said that with the way the property is being conveyed to the town, it will have an opportunity to use CPA funds. In that instance, the CPC will be updated on the outcome of the planning process.

### **Community Preservation Coalition Annual Dues - Admin Request \$1,500**

Christine reported that the CPC has received their annual invoice for the Community Preservation Coalition dues for 2012. The dues have not changed in at least four years. The Coalition is very helpful to the Committee. There was no discussion. Peter moved to pay the dues out of the CPC's administration fund. Tom seconded. The vote was unanimous.

### **CPA Signage**

Christine provided quotes for temporary signs made out of corrugated plastic. They are black and white and would be put up at a CPA project site during construction. Ed moved that the CPC use administration funds to purchase one dozen 24 x 24 signs with the town seal and the taller legs. Permanent signs would be determined one a project-by-project basis. Peter move to approve. The vote was unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:15 pm.